

A Reply to the Paris Gazette, in a Letter from Flanders.

S I R,

20. July. 1758.

MY last was to inform you of the Victory obtain'd over the Enemy, and this of the Particulars which have happen'd since.

The Enemy perceiving after the Action, that their Communication with their Lines and Frontier Towns was entirely cut off, repass'd the *Scheld* the same Night in the greatest Confusion, and betook themselves to *Ghent* the next Morning, as the only Place of Refuge they had any Hopes of.

The same Day a Council of War was held in *Ghent* what Measures to take; which you will imagine afford Matter of Debate under such a Disgrace. The Consequence of having the Communication between their Army and *France* cut off, with the Danger *France* was expos'd to, by having their Frontier Towns and Lines at the Mercy of the Duke of *Marlborough*, was warmly argued: But this Argument (tho' of the highest Concern) was soon overaw'd when they consider'd the vigorous and most indefatigable General they had to deal with, the Danger of having their Army entirely routed, should they attempt to march into any part of their Country in that Confusion, appear'd too visible; therefore with little or no Opposition it was resolv'd the Army should encamp with the Canal of *Bruges* before them; where they have cover'd their Camp with Lines, and planted Cannon upon their Entrenchments for their better Security. So that whatever Dangers their Country was expos'd to, they resolv'd not to run the least Risk of having their Army fall in that Disorder under the Hands of the Confederates.

There were also several other Consequences argu'd in Favour of the Army passing the Canal of *Bruges*, for they conceiv'd it wou'd draw the Confederate Army towards *Ghent*; which would give Time to the Duke of *Berwick* to Post himself in the Lines near *Ipre*, whereby their Retreat by the Way of *Furne* would be made more easy: That in Case the Duke of *Berwick* was prevented of taking Post there, by the March of the Duke of *Marlborough*, the whole Country of *Dutch Flanders* would lie at their Mercy, and give them an Opportunity of intercepting the Duke's Convoys; which perhaps might oblige the Duke to alter his Measures, or at least open a Passage for them through *Brabant*, to the Side of *Namure*.

The Duke of *Marlborough* (who has never yet wanted Foresight to deal with a *Frenchman*) being sensible of the Advantage the Enemy might make of the Post they were in, consulted by what Means to pursue the Victory he had gain'd, and leaves the *French* in their Hold; where he knew the Scarcity of Provisions, with the Multitude of Ditches and Rivulets, would not permit them to stay long; and has taken such Measures as will effectually disappoint their Design. Accordingly Prince *Eugene* march'd with a Body of Troops from the Grand Army, in Order to join his own Forces in *Brabant*, to prevent the Duke of *Berwick* from undertaking any thing on the Side of *Brussels*, or his joining the *French* Army, and their Army from attempting their Retreat through *Brabant*, as they conceiv'd they might.

On the Side of the *French Flanders*, His Grace caus'd several Towns to be attack'd in the Front of their Lines, which surrender'd after some small Resistance: Whereby we became Masters of 'em for several Leagues.

The 15th His Grace caus'd the Lines to be levell'd, to prevent the Enemy from taking Sanctuary in that Part, and has sent out Parties as far as *Pickard*, to raise Contributions.

Deputies are arriv'd from several Towns to treat with His Grace, and some have suffer'd Military Execution, which you will imagine has put the Isle of *France* under the greatest Consideration, as well as the Court.

Thus the Hopes the *French* flatter'd themselves with from the Motions of the Duke of *Berwick*, are entirely dissipated, and that General oblig'd to take all the necessary Precautions to secure himself. I am told his Army pass'd by *Namure* the 14th and 15th, consisting of 36 Battalions and 67 Squadrons; which perhaps may amount to about 29000 Effective Men, out of which he will send thither what is necessary to reinforce the Garrison of *Charlois*, *Mons*, *Conde*, *St. Amand*, and *Valencien*: All which Places I am apt to think were bare enough of Troops before his coming into that Country, and likely to stand in as much need of being secur'd as either *Lille*, *Tournay*, or *Ipre*. So that the greatest Number of Forces we can suppose that General to command in a Body cannot exceed 10000; a Force too mean to imagine they should give the Confederates the least Disturbance, seeing the Duke of *Vendosme*, with near 20000 Majority, was neither able to defend himself, nor any Part of *France*.

Thus the Adion proves every Day more Glorious to the Confederates, and the small Hopes the Enemy had conceiv'd of giving a Division with their Army from the *Rhine*, is turn'd to Shift as Shift can; inasmuch that the most flourishing Army commanded by a Prince of the Blood, and a Numerous Number of the first Rank of Quality in *France*, are now drove for Refuge amongst Bogs and Ditches.

But how sorry a Shift is it under this Disgrace, to buoy up their drooping Spirits, by telling us they have block'd up our Artillery, that we cannot undertake a Siege? which happen'd merely accidental, and to save themselves; for their Intention was to give us the Go-by without coming to an Action, as they might easily have done, had not His Grace march'd with an extraordinary Diligence and Courage to attack them in their March; which, considering the Distance he was from them, the Difficulties of the Road, and the River we had to pass, they look'd upon it as impossible he should come up with 'em that Day: And how mean does it look in the *French*, to boast that the Duke is hinder'd from undertaking any thing further for want of Great Guns? tho' they know he need not be long without, if His Grace should find it the best Way to pursue the Victory by Besieging of Towns. This is but a poor Attainment for so shameful a Retreat of such an Army, whose Superiority of Troops, Valour and Conduct their *Mercury Gallant* has boasted of throughout all *Europe*.

We are now preparing to march towards *Bruges*, which will very much frighten their Camp; nor is it possible for them to continue there long, there being so many Ways to let the Water in upon them, to hinder Provisions being brought to them: So that its probable Necessity at last may put them upon something very desperate, but they will always find us upon our Guard, and as ready to receive 'em.

From the Camp at *Warrick*, July 19. 1758.

Yours, &c

